



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON INVASIVE SPECIES

Jim Doyle, Governor

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For Immediate Release

BE AN INVADER CRUSADER: FOUR SIMPLE ACTIONS THAT WISCONSIN CITIZENS CAN TAKE TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Madison—Zebra mussels overtaking our lakes, purple loosestrife creating wastelands of our wetlands, gypsy moths defoliating acres and acres of trees. The Great Lakes bordering Wisconsin harbor at least 162 invasive plant and animal species. The rest of Wisconsin's lands and waters are threatened by about 170 invasive plants, 33 invasive animals and 3 tree diseases. They displace native species, disrupt ecosystems, and affect citizens' livelihoods and quality of life. Citizens may be overwhelmed with such statistics and feel that the problem is beyond their capacity to have any impact. Wrong! Citizens can make a difference by adopting some simple practices.

If citizens can slow the spread of invasive species that are already here as well as limit the introduction of new ones, this will buy professionals and committed conservation organizations the time and resources they need to focus on the existing infestations. On June 8, 2005, Governor Jim Doyle helped present the first annual Invader Crusader Awards in Port Washington. He applauded the awardees, a number of whom were citizen volunteers, for going "above and beyond the call of duty to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in Wisconsin." He further stated that "the health of our ecosystems, our economy, and our way of life rests in large part on the acts of individuals." Join the team of Wisconsin citizens and become an invader crusader!

Following is a list of high-impact actions that are relatively simple for citizens to adopt. For more details and actions, as well as other information on invasive species, see: <http://invasivespecies.wi.gov> or <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives>.

Action #1: If you bring it, burn it!

Firewood can harbor many different kinds of invasive pests and diseases harmful to Wisconsin's trees, including gypsy moths, oak wilt, emerald ash borer and beech bark disease.

- ✓ If you bring firewood when camping, burn all of it. The longer it remains on the ground, the more chance that a pest or disease can move into the living trees nearby.
- ✓ Don't bring firewood from out of state, especially Lower Michigan; it's at high risk of carrying emerald ash borer. Instead, buy firewood produced locally. It has less risk of introducing new pests and diseases to an area.
- ✓ Need more information? See: http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/action_forest.htm.

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Action #2: Protect Our Waters!

Invasive species such as zebra mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil can hitch a ride on boats and trailers and in live wells, traveling from one water to another. It is illegal to launch a watercraft with zebra mussels or aquatic plants attached. To avoid transporting aquatic invasive species:

- ✓ INSPECT your boat, trailer and equipment and REMOVE visible aquatic plants, animals and mud.
- ✓ DRAIN water from livewells, bilge, motor, bait buckets and transom wells.
- ✓ DRY the boat and equipment for five days before transferring to a new lake. If drying isn't possible, RINSE boat, trailer and equipment with hot water and/or SPRAY with high-pressure water.
- ✓ DISPOSE OF UNUSED BAIT into the trash.
- ✓ Need more information? See: http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/action_water.htm.

Action #3: Stop the Spread by Sole and Tread!

You may be a hunter, birdwatcher, mountain biker, all-terrain vehicle user, or hiker. Whether walking or riding through city parks or remote natural areas, you may unknowingly be collecting the seeds of invasive plants on your footwear and vehicle tires. They can then be transferred to wherever your feet and vehicle go. To avoid transporting terrestrial invasive species:

- ✓ Keep a small, stiff-bristled brush in your vehicle, home and/or backpack. Before traveling through natural areas, inspect and brush your footwear clean of caked-on soil and seeds. A small screwdriver may be handy for prying mud from deep treads. This should also be done during the course of a hike if you knowingly walk through an area of heavy invasive species infestation.
- ✓ Many nature preserves in Wisconsin are installing 'boot brush stations' at entry points. Read the informational signs and use the boot brush!
- ✓ Regularly inspect and remove caked-on soil and seeds from vehicle tires after off-road travel. Spray tires down with high-pressure water.
- ✓ Need more information? See: http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/action_plants.htm.

Action #4: Green Thumbs Down for Invasive Plants!

Plants that you install in your home water garden or landscape may escape cultivation and become invasive species that crowd out native plants, damage habitat for fish, birds and wildlife, diminish recreational opportunities, and incur great expenses for their control. Seeds, berries and plant fragments from your garden can be spread to adjacent natural areas by wind, water (especially flooding), footwear, vehicle tires, and even by animals who eat them or carry them in their fur.

- ✓ Before buying plants, check to see if they have the potential to be invasive. Avoid planting invasive species, or seek to understand species-specific 'safe practices' required to prevent them from spreading to natural areas.
- ✓ If you discover that you have invasive species in your home landscape, remove them, kill them or prevent them from spreading beyond your yard.
- ✓ Need more information? See: <http://invasivespecies.wi.gov>. (Click on "What YOU Can Do!", then "Beware of What You Plant.")

This news release is sponsored by the Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species. The Wisconsin State Legislature created the Council, to which Governor Doyle appointed 13 members. The Council's mission is to prevent and reduce the harmful impacts of invasive species on Wisconsin's environment and economy, as well as human well-being. Funding for this news release was provided by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the Natural Resource Foundation's C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program.